

Every Child Learning Every Day



February 2003

An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

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READY TO LEARN

'Don't Forget the Bacon'

Idaho teachers have shared some of their favorite books and activities for children as part of Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard's "Dinner and a Book" initiative.

This month's suggestion was submitted by Carrie Aguas, Title I teacher at New Plymouth Elementary.

Book:
"Don't Forget the Bacon," by Pat Hutchings.

Story synopsis:
A child is sent to the grocery store for four items. As he walks, he recites the items to himself. He sees things along the way that begin to change the list. Six farm eggs become six fat legs ... Finally he gets the correct items and heads home. When he sees his mom, he realizes that he forgot the bacon. Lots of pictures and word play.

Activity suggestions:
Children of all ages can help make the shopping list. Very young children can draw pictures as the adult writes the word. Children entering school can write the first sound they hear. Older children can write the list as it is dictated. Any involvement draws the child into the importance of writing notes to be used later.

To learn more about Dr. Howard's Dinner and Book program, visit: www.sde.state.id.us/DinnerandaBook.



Building stronger links with schools

Dear Reader:

We have long known that a child's learning experiences in the first few years of life help shape his success in school.

The preschool years are a time when the foundation for literacy and so many other skills is put into place.

A new focus on early childhood programs by the federal government will strengthen the connections between preschool programs and schools by requiring that standards and assessments be incorporated into programs receiving federal support.

By this summer, states must have in place "early learning guidelines" for young children that link the learning expectations or standards for preschool students to those for K-12 students.

A state task force has drafted the Idaho Early Learning Standards. If you are a regular reader of this newsletter, these will be familiar.



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Each month, we have featured one of the literacy standards in the column below.

In March and April, trainings on the standards will be held throughout the state. For more information contact

Mary Bostick of the State Department of Education at (208) 332-6913.

In addition to standards, many federally-funded programs will move toward assessing the skills of children. Some concerns have been raised about the early testing of children. However, if done properly and with the right intent, assessment can be a valuable help to parents and teachers.

Two years ago, the State Department of Education created a pre-kindergarten Idaho Reading Indicator to help educators in preschool programs assess the preliteracy skills of students. Teachers use the results to help shape instruction of students.

These exciting changes provide an opportunity to create a stronger link between preschool and school.

Marilyn Howard

READY TO LEARN

Writing and reading go together

Writing and reading go together. As a child is learning one he is learning the other.

Young children benefit from having many experiences with writing. You can do fun activities to make sure your child gets lots of practice with both.

A great way to foster understanding that print has meaning is to explain to your child when you're writing. It can be a shopping list, a thank you note, or a birthday card.

You may want to consider keeping a backpack filled with scrap paper and crayons that you can take along when you know you may have to wait.

Children need to understand that written language has a purpose. At about age 2, most children will want



to use crayons or markers to start their own writing. At that age it's usually just scribbles,

but it's important to praise their efforts. Allow them to sign birthday cards to family members with their scribble and to write notes (scribbles) that go on the family bulletin board or refrigerator. Make sure you write notes to them too, that get posted in a prominent spot.

As your child gets older he or she can tell you their stories and you can write them down. Ask questions that will help them organize their thoughts. Questions like "What happened next?" will help them understand concepts such as setting, character, theme, and plot.

READING STANDARDS

Each month, the Early Childhood Newsletter focuses on a preschool reading standard.

This month's standard is understand and use the writing process.

Skills included under this standard are participating in a variety of pre-writing and writing activities and experiments with writing tools and materials.

Activities to support the development of this skill include using crayon, pencils, paints, and dough to form symbols, letters, and words.

A great way to encourage a love of reading and writing is to help your child create his own book.

Paste stories on construction paper, punch a hole in each left corner, and tie it together with yarn. You'll be fostering a love of reading and pride in writing.



RESOURCES

Hints offered for getting out writing stains

Helping young children master their pre-writing skills often means that a scribble or two may go astray.

The folks who make Crayons® offer tips at www.crayola.com for removing stains of a variety of their products. Below are some of those hints.

These removal methods involve hazardous products and should be done only by adults.

Fabric-fresh stains/heat-set stains(melted) — Materials: Laundry detergent, liquid dishwashing detergent, WD-40® (car part lubricant,) bleach for colored clothing, paper towels

Procedure: Place the stained surface down on pad of paper towels, spray with WD-40, let stand a few minutes, turn fabric over and spray the other side. Apply liquid dishwashing detergent and work into the stained area, replacing toweling as it absorbs the stain. Wash in hot water with laundry detergent and bleach for about 12 minutes (use heavy soiled setting if there is no minute timer on your machine) and rinse in warm water. Special note for heat-set stains: Clean the drum of your dryer to remove any remaining wax residue. Spray a soft cloth with WD-40®, and wipe the drum. Run a load of dry rags through a drying cycle to ensure the drum is clean.

Painted walls — Materials: Sponge, liquid dishwashing detergent, soft cloth, WD-40® (car part lubricant), warm water.

Procedure: Spray the surface to be cleaned with WD-40 and wipe clean with a soft cloth. If residue remains add liquid dishwashing soap to water. Wash the surface with a sponge working in a circular motion and rinse.

Carpet & upholstery — Materials: Sponge, paper towels, dull knife or metal spoon, WD-40® (car part lubricant), liquid dishwashing detergent, small stiff-bristle brush.

Procedure: Scrape excess crayon off with a dull-edge knife or metal spoon. Spray with WD-40 and let stand a few minutes. With a small, stiff-bristle brush work crayon stain and wipe with paper towels. Respray with WD-40 and apply liquid dishwashing detergent on the sprayed area; work in with the brush and wipe stain away with a damp sponge.

NUTRITION

Build a veggie treat: Bird's Nest Salad

Most people today, including children, eat fewer than the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Different fruits and vegetables are rich in different nutrients. Some fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of Vitamin A, while others are rich in Vitamin C, folate, or potassium.

Most fruits and vegetables

are low in fat and calories and are filling.

Below is recipe that might tempt little taste buds to vitamin rich carrots and spark imaginations, too:

Bird's Nest Salad

1/3 cup grated carrots

5 or 6 grapes

1 teaspoon salad dress-

ing

1. Place grated carrot in a bowl and add salad dressing, stirring to moisten.

2. Place carrot mix in a mound in the center of a plate, make a hollow in the carrots with the back of a spoon.

Get hopping!

Try playing with hoops to provide physical activity after snack time! Line up hoola hoops on the floor, have children walk, hop, and run around hoops to a variety of music. Jump into the hoop, and then out. Balance with feet out of hoop and hands in the hoop. Carpet squares can be used in place of hoops.

3. Place grape "eggs" in the carrot "nest."

Cut grapes in half for children under age 2.

This provides one serving of snack for a 1-5 year old. Serve one bird nest and 1/2 slice of whole wheat toast sprinkled with parmesan cheese.

READY TO LEARN

Make note of how every thing measures up

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics offers simple tips to help parents help children understand math. **This month's skill — measurement.**

Measurement is finding the length, height, and weight of an object using units like inches, feet, and pounds.

Measurement is an important way for young children to look for relationships in the real world. By practicing measurement your child will learn how big or little things are and how to figure that out.



What adults can do: Standard measurements like inches, feet, and yards are only one way to measure. Let children pick their own unit for measurement — "Raymond is five cereal boxes tall."

Many daily activities involve measurement: cooking, gardening, grocery shopping, sewing, and woodworking are only a few examples. Keep your child involved in these chores by talking with them about what you are doing, and by asking them to help you when possible.

Next month: measuring time.

For more information about Idaho's efforts to support math achievement visit: www.sde.state.id.us/idahomathacademy/.

ACTIVITIES

Celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday March 3

What is the National Education Association's (NEA) Read Across America? NEA's Read Across America is an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on or around Dr. Seuss's birthday. In 2003 that falls on a Sunday, so we've decided to make it easy for everyone to celebrate by designating Monday, March 3, as this year's official NEA's Read Across America Day.

How and when did NEA's Read Across America begin? In May 1997, a small reading task force at NEA came up with a big idea. "Let's create a day to celebrate reading," the group decided. "We hold pep rallies to get kids excited about football. We assemble to remember that Character Counts. Why don't we do something to get kids excited about reading? We'll call it 'NEA's Read Across America' and we'll celebrate it on Dr. Seuss's birthday."

Why NEA's Read Across America?

Motivating children to read is an important factor in student achievement and in creating lifelong successful readers. Research has shown that children



Idaho information

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who are motivated and spend more time reading do better in school.

How can I get involved?

Contact your local school, education association, library or bookstore about events that are taking place in your community.